London Benton

February 7, 2014

Hamtramck, Michigan
Positive since 2005

I'm a 31-year-old professional singer. I've also modeled part time. I found out I was HIV positive on July 13, 2005. I finished my EP album in April 2012 and I recently released a single for my second CD called "Crossover Blessing." The proceeds go to help provide food and shelter for those in the HIV and LGBT community and to fund those who are in need. You can hear the single on my Facebook page and also on iTunes, Amazon, Spotify and Shazam under London Benton.

I was a counselor for those living with HIV at the University of Chicago hospital's Call Me Project. I was also a board member and co-chairman for the Chicago Department of Public Health. I'm a HIV/AIDS activist, certified tester, counselor and a certified HIV facility inspector liaison.

I'm currently a national ambassador for DeedPin. I advocate for those living with HIV—even during the difficult moments I've had to face as someone who lives with the virus. I've helped provide money and resources to those who are HIV positive. I try to help those who are not positive to stay negative by teaching them to have safe sex. You can watch my HIV awareness ads on YouTube here and here.

I love to cook—I was a chef at Lakeland College for three and a half years. I pledged the fraternity Beta Sigma Omega. I also love to travel and meet new people of all walks of life.

I am saving money to turn rooms in my house into a safe space for those who have been marginalized and stigmatized by society, families or the church. It's amazing to hear the testimonies of those whose lives I've touched. One of my dreams is to be "the face of hope" on the cover of POZ magazine. There is life after an HIV diagnosis.

What three adjectives best describe you?
Dependable, patient and transparent

What is your greatest achievement?
Staying in care to become undetectable

What is your greatest regret?
Not being tested earlier—I only had 79 CD4 cells when I was diagnosed

What keeps you up at night?
I’m normally up writing music or adding to my book that will be released soon.

If you could change one thing about living with HIV, what would it be?
Remove the stigma in the church and the feeling that being positive is a judgment from God

What is the best advice you ever received?
It’s NOT about ME!

What person in the HIV/AIDS community do you most admire?
Sanford Gaylord

What drives you to do what you do?
What drives me to do what I do is that I remember the day I found out I was positive. I felt like I was alone and I never want anyone to feel that.

What is your motto?
“Failure is evidence that I tried, but success is proof that I didn’t give up!”
—Joshua Benton Stovall

If you had to evacuate your house immediately, what is the one thing you would grab on the way out?
My pictures and my medicine

If you could be any animal, what would you be? And why?
An eagle! I find that eagles fly above storms.

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